



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
REGION 10

1200 Sixth Avenue, Suite 900
Seattle, Washington 98101-3140

July 28, 2008

Reply To
Attn Of: ETPA-088

Ref: 04-048-BLM

Carrie Christman
Bureau of Land Management,
Cottonwood Field Office
ATTN: RMP, House 1
Butte Drive Route 3, Box 181
Cottonwood, ID 83522-9498

Dear Ms. Christman:

The EPA has reviewed the final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) for the **Cottonwood Resource Management Plan** (RMP) (CEQ No. 20060347) in accordance with our responsibilities under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and Section 309 of the Clean Air Act.

This FEIS describes and analyzes four alternatives for managing approximately 132,526 acres of public lands and resources administered by the Bureau of Land Management's Cottonwood Field Office (CFO) in Latah, Clearwater, Nez Perce, Lewis, Idaho, and Adams Counties of northcentral Idaho. As a result of public comment and internal BLM review, the agency's Preferred Alternative (Alternative B) presented in the May 2006 Cottonwood Draft RMP/EIS has been modified and is now considered the Proposed Action for management of BLM lands in the CFO. This alternative seeks to emphasize a balanced level of protection, restoration, and commodity production.

In our November, 2006 comment letter on the Draft EIS, we raised concerns regarding the ability of the proposed RMP to restore designated beneficial uses and achieve the delisting of 303(d) listed stream segments. We also requested additional information regarding source water for public water supplies in the project area and monitoring requirements. We appreciate the efforts you and your staff have taken to address these concerns through additional information and modifications to Alternative B. In particular, we appreciate the additional "Actions" and "Objectives" within the Water Resources section regarding the avoidance of impacts to sources of drinking water, the expanded discussion of monitoring programs, and the decision establish default widths on intermittent streams consistent with existing riparian management under PACFISH/INFISH. We support these revisions and believe them to be consistent with the Interior Columbia Basin Strategy for aquatic and riparian habitat.

Thank you for the opportunity to review this final EIS. If you have questions or comments, please contact Teresa Kubo (503) 326-2859 or myself at (206) 553-1601.

Sincerely,

/s/

Christine Reichgott, Manager
NEPA Review Unit